MCCC
Mid-Cities Commodore Club Dallas/Ft.Worth
November 1989 MCCC NEWS Volume 7 Issue 11

METCOM*89 - The Report

by Bill Raecke

Well, our third annual METCOM is over with. Time to reflect on how it went and to report a little on what went on for those who were unable to make it. The opinions contained here are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of the management.

THE EXHIBIT HALL

There were quite a few exhibitors this year, although there was still space for more. Local computer and software dealers represented at the show included Amazing Computer Systems, Budget Computer, Metropolitan Computer Software Etc., and Software Terminal. There was plenty of software and hardware on hand from these establishments to make it possible for many of us (me) to spend a great deal more money than we had anticipated. Developers were represented by Inovatronics who was giving previews all day of the upcoming product Can-Do, by Lee Software showing the Total Diet Control program for the Amiga, and by The Derringer Project. MicroBotics was also on hand but did not have a booth. Label Appeal was on hand to provide pre-printed labels and forms for use with your computer and Benetech Electronic Supply was there to handle all your cable, switch-box, and technical supply needs.

A newcomer to the show this year was Barry's Camera & Video. They were showing disk-based cameras and other video products which have a natural tie-in to the Amiga. They were also kind enough to help out with equipment for our video booth.

Speaking of the video booth -- yes, we did have one. If you were lucky enough to get there early, you may have gotten digitized. The booth had its share of problems however, and there were some of us who were never able to make it to the front of the line. Most of the problems seemed to be self-inflicted and were related to some bad disk copies made using a non-standard disk duplication method. Hopefully we can avoid such problems if we do it again next year.

The Computer Art Booth was a welcome addition. Our major contributors were Jean Riley, Marilyn Coughran, and Jody Reimers. Their Amiga art work was well worth seeing (and well worth buying). Also in the art world was Herschel Gibbs with his music booth featuring his six-voice C-64 -- entertaining as always.

Our Networking exhibit didn't quite come off as planned. We were to have a network of Amiga, MAC, and MS-DOS equipment all communicating with each other. Unfortunately the only equipment I ever saw was the Amiga. Nonetheless, it was an interesting demonstration featuring X-Windows running on the Amiga.

THE SIDE ROOMS

So much for our main exhibit space. On one side of the main exhibit hall were the club software libraries, the workshops where help was available for those needing assistance on their computers, and the Flea Market. The flea market did well, but not as well as expected. The problem seemed to be that there were a lot of people at the show who never knew that those three rooms were there. Suggestion for next year: Put everything in one big room (except the theater area).

Oh yes, there was the theater space. We were treated to a series of excellent talks all day long, starting with Jay Miner and ending with Marilyn Coughran on computer art. Talks between these two included information on HAM/Packet radio by Curtis Crago, a Can-Do demonstration by Inovatronics, and a demo of the Total Diet Control package from Lee Software. All, of course, were included in the price of admission.

HIGHS AND LOWS

Without question, the high point of the day had to be the talk and continuing conversations with Jay Miner. Jay proved to be a very likeable and very well-spoken man. His scheduled talk in the morning was very informative (a report follows). Throughout the day, he continued to make himself very accessible for questions and discussions with interested people. Our special thanks to Jay for making this event a very speci

Jay Miner Visits METCOM*89

A Report by Ned Kelly
MCCC Vice President

METCOM*89 featured Jay Miner as its keynote speaker. Jay is often hailed as the father of the Amiga and as such gave us an inside look at the origins of the machine.

Jay's presentation began with the showing of a video tape that Commodore had recently sent him. The tape contained all of the commercials for the Amiga that are airing around the country. They feature a teenage boy using the power of his Amiga to help various well known people solve a myriad of problems. Both Jay and the audience felt that these commercials were targeting the Amiga as a home computer, and that although the commercials were very good and entertaining, Commodore was once again ignoring the business end of the market.

Next Jay began telling us about the company that was formed to begin work on what would ultimately become the Amiga. Did you know that the original financial backing for the Amiga came from Texas? Well according to Jay it did. The machine was originally conceived by Jay to be the ultimate flight simulation computer which was what he was into at the time. That explains the fantastic sound and graphic capabilities. Jay was in charge of the design of the chip set which gives the machine its sound and graphics. But after putting several years of work into the custom chips the company was on the verge of bankruptcy. Atari was interested in the chips for their own machine and began negotiating. However, before an agreement could be reached with Atari, Commodore entered the picture and came out the winner.

When Commodore took over they wanted to get moving and get a machine out the door. They wanted to put out their kind of machine and Jay had his own ideas of what the machine should look like. Jay wanted an expandable computer with slots and Commodore wanted a box that looked like a C64. Commodore won on many of the points but Jay felt strongly about the expandability of the machine and he put his job on the line over it. As a result the Amiga 1000 had an expansion port on the side and Jay still had a job. *(Editor's Note: This is interesting since the two Amiga designs currently in production seem to parallel those two initial concepts. The 500 is basically a self-contained computer, small but powerful and well suited to the home -- much like that originally envisioned by Commodore although with the added expansion port that Jay was committed to. The 2000 seems to be the culmination of Jay's original concept.)*

During a question and answer period Jay was asked what he would do differently if he could do it all over again. He said that the main thing he would change is the graphics.

METCOM*89 - The Report
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The low point for me was a less than expected attendance. Although our advertising seemed to be somewhat successful in drawing in non-MCCC members, it did not draw in as many as I expected. The main problem however, seemed to be indifference by members of this club. I can't understand why virtually everyone doesn't attend an event of this magnitude. We had a larger and far more interesting show than the AmiFORUM held here earlier this year, and yet our attendance was only about a third of that event. I welcome your comments.

SUMMARY

Despite my comments about light attendance, the show was a success. The attendance was acceptable -- in fact, it appeared to be the biggest turnout we have had to date at a METCOM event. In terms of the show itself, our President, Jack DeTore, our Vice President, Ned Kelly, and all the other people who worked so hard are to be congratulated. It ran smoothly and looked quite professional. AmiFORUM needs to come here for some advice before they put on another show.

Our Thanks For The Support

From All Of Us
The Mid-Cities Commodore Club

The Mid-Cities Commodore Club would like to thank the following dealers and developers for their generous support of METCOM*89 and their donations of the following doorprizes:

From Amazing Computer Systems, Inc.
- Metacomco Shell (3)
- MaxiComm
- LDebug
- Pagesetter
- Prism (2)
- Vizawrite
- QuickMerge
- Deluxe Help for DPaint II (2)
- Express Paint
- Logistik
- Explorer
- Nancy
- Softwood File Sound&Graphics
- City Desk with Art Companion #1
- City Desk Art Companion #3
- Publishers' Choice
- CLI-Mate

From Benetech Electronics
- 10 foot parallel printer cable

From Budget Computer
- Joy Stick
- Batman
- Gretzky Hockey
- Static Buster

From Inovatronics, Inc.
- Gift Certificate for CanDo! when it is released.

From Label Appeal
- Package of 50 Christmas tree labels

From Metropolitan Computers
- 40 gift certificates for services
- (Awarded as 5 prizes of 8 unique gift certificates)

From MicroBotics, Inc.
- HardFrame 2000 disk controller

From Sierra On-Line, Inc.
- Leisure Suit Larry in the Land of the Lounge Lizards

From Software, Etc.
- One package of computer stationary

From Software Terminal
- Passport MIDI interface
- SuperBase
- Sonix

From Startext Electronic Information Service
- 5 One week subscriptions for Startext

We would also like to say a special thanks to:

Amazing Computer Systems, Inc. for their help in advertising METCOM*89.

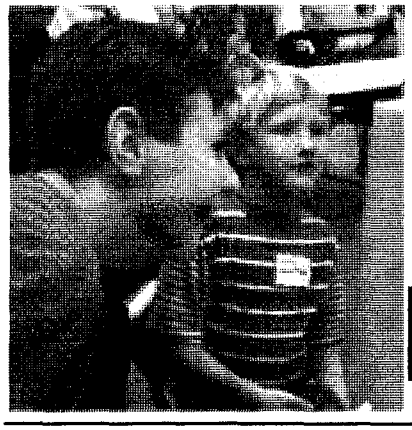
Barry's Camera & Video for the loan of video equipment for the Photo Booth.

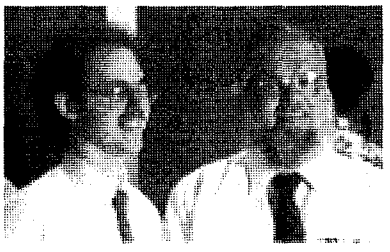
SCOPE for cancelling the October meeting in support of METCOM*89.

Jay Miner's Talk
(Continued From Page 2)

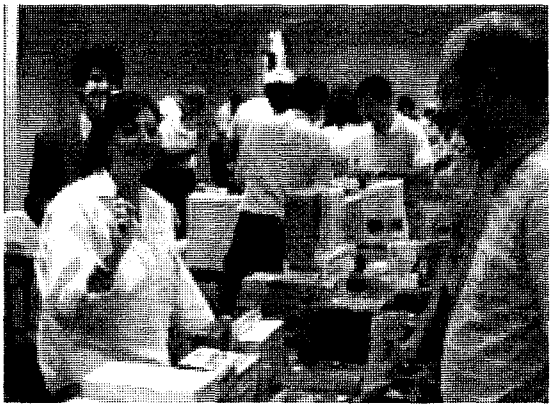
The bit plane graphics of the Amiga would go and be replaced by pixel graphics which seem to be more standard.

Jay also explained the origins of HAM mode graphics. It is an idea which had its start in large scale flight simulators. They use a method wherby the palette can be modified from one pixel to the next by changing either the Hue, the Saturation or the Value of the color. When programmed into the Amiga, this was changed to allow the modification of the Red, Green, or Blue components of the color. Jay was in favor of eliminating this changed design from the final chip, believing that it would never be used. It remained only because it was already an integral part of the design and there was no time to remove it -- so HAM mode was left on the chip by default. Jay said that he never dreamed of some of the things that are being done in HAM mode and was very glad that it was left in.





The picures of METCOM*89 were digitized from videotape by Jack DeTore.



Disk Copiers

Amiga Info from Johnny C. Kitchens Mid-Cities Commodore Club

Disk copy utilities can bring many thoughts to the minds of computer users. One user may think of copiers as a great tool, others may think of them as tools of crime. A utility is the way I see these copiers, so hopefully others will too.

I decided to do a performance comparison to see which copier is truly the fastest at copying an ordinary, everyday AmigaDOS disk. As most probably know, the copy utility which comes with Workbench 1.3 is so slow that if you use it, you become very thankful for multi-tasking.

For this test I gathered up some of the more popular and well known copiers that I could find. My list doesn't include all the copiers around, but if you have one not listed you can at least compare it to the ones here. I copied a disk which was showing 853,946 bytes on it. This gave Copy (the file copy program on Workbench), and B.A.D. the longest copying time. It must be remembered that B.A.D. offers other advantages while copying the disk.

Here are the results:

COPIER	Copying time in seconds
Copy	621
B.A.D.	205
QuickNibble	107
RawCopy 1.3e	100
Marauder II	82
NIB	82
BurstNibbler	71
XCOPY II	69

XCOPY II is the winner by 2 seconds over Burst. Interesting that both XCOPY II and Burst are from Europe. I wonder what they know that we don't.

Editor's Note: Please note that the time given for the Workbench "Copy" is for the file copy utility, not DiskCopy. Since "Copy" and B.A.D both copy individual files from disk to disk, times will vary widely according to the number of files and the amount of information on the disk. The DiskCopy program supplied with Workbench will copy a disk in 98 seconds and that time will remain constant regardless of the amount of information on the disk. One more thing: Copying a standard AmigaDOS disk with any of the copy programs listed above (with the exceptions of the AmigaDOS Copy and B.A.D.) is risky. Those programs are designed to detect errors on the source disk and reproduce them. It is not uncommon for such a program to think that it has detected an error when no such error exists. When this happens, your destination disk will be corrupted.

Workbench 1.3.2

Amiga Information From Amy Info

The official version of Workbench 1.3.2 is now on Genie, PeopleLink, and Compuserve. It consists of two ZOO files totalling about 117K and, according to Commodore's license agreement, is expressly prohibited from being redistributed anywhere else. This does include BBS's and FidoNETs.

There are no new programs; most of the changes are bug fixes and improvements to existing programs. DiskCopy has now been changed to default to validate, use Fast Memory, and copy a disk in one pass. It also can read a disk into memory and make multiple copies. FFS has had a bug fix, as has serial.device, and Setpatch has been updated.

Length	File Name
976	System/FastMemFirst
12840	System/Format
1792	System/NoFastMem
4060	System/SetMap
8436	Utilities/CMD
4408	Utilities/ClockPtr
7036	c/DiskDoctor
1972	c/Eval
2804	c/LoadWB
5604	c/Mount
4884	c/SetClock
5088	c/SetPatch
26964	devs/printer.device
5292	devs/serial.device
16380	libs/info.library
2448	l/Aux-Handler
12248	l/FastFileSystem
3332	l/Pipe-Handler
4212	l/Speak-Handler
361	License.info
361	ReadMe.info
17756	System/DiskCopy
5450	ReadMe
9261	LICENSE
404	libs/version.library
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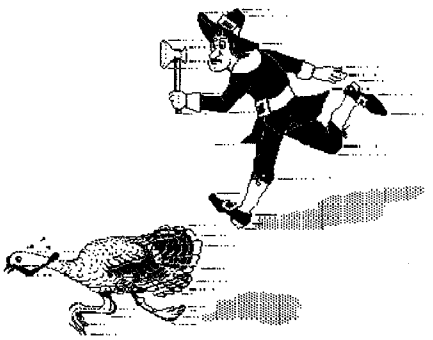

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NEW SERVICES

Professional Scan Lab

This month we will be adding Professional Scan Lab to our list of Amiga Services. Pro Scan Lab is an IEEE interface from ASDG that connects the Amiga to a Sharp JX 450 scanner. PSL will scan up to 16.7 million colors at resolutions up to 300 DPI. that may be displayed in the Amigas 4096 color HAM mode resulting in the best digitized images you'll see !

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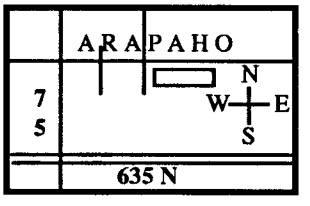

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New Stuff I Just Got

Amiga Software Reviews by Bill Raecke
Mid-Cities Commodore Club

PixelScript 1.1 by Pixelations

First - what is it? PixelScript is a print utility that can take a PostScript file and convert it to a dot-matrix image suitable for output to any Preferences supported printer capable of printing bitmapped graphics. Quite a mouthful. To make that a little clearer, I need to review the concept of PostScript processing.

PostScript is a programming language. If you edit a PostScript file, you will find that it is an ASCII file consisting of a set of commands, ready to be interpreted by a PostScript interpreter. Information describing fonts (if the font is not built into the printer) is sent as vector information, that is, a series of lines and curves. Once the font has been described, text is described along with information on placement and point-size to be used (PostScript fonts are infinitely scalable). In a like fashion, object oriented drawings are described as a series of lines and curves. The advantage of describing a document in this way is that it uses a standard set of commands to describe a document. The same PostScript file can then be processed by any PostScript interpreter and the image will be as sharp as is possible on the output device -- it will not be limited in any way by the resolution of the computer.

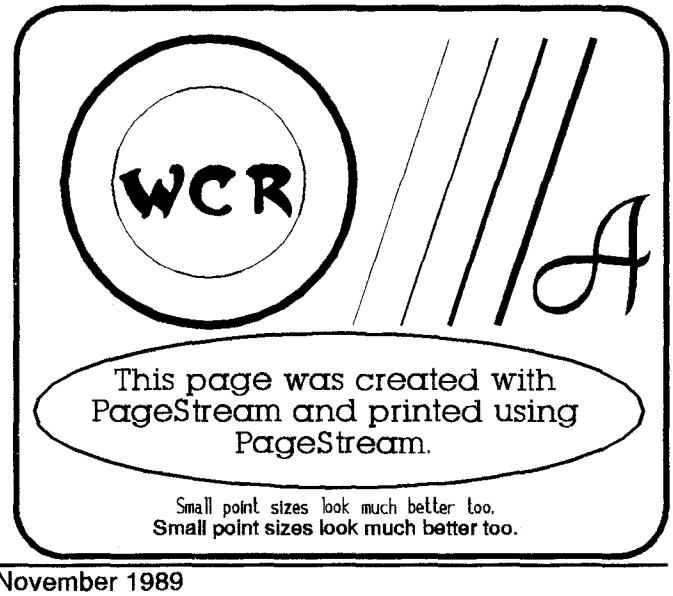
Traditionally, this PostScript file is sent to a PostScript printer (normally a laser printer) which contains a PostScript interpreter and two or more megabytes of RAM memory. The PostScript printer interprets the commands in the file and translates the vector information into a bit-mapped image which is then printed. The large amounts of RAM are required because of the size of the bit-mapped image. A standard PostScript printer operates at 300 dots per inch. That means that for a standard page, there are 8,464,500 dots which require 1,058,062.5 bytes to describe. Because of the memory requirements to store the bit-map, PostScript printers are very expensive -- out of the reach of most home users.

When PostScript was invented, computers were not capable of handling the large amounts of RAM required to describe a bit-map at the necessary resolution. With the Amiga, all that changed. The Amiga is capable of handling up to nine megabytes of RAM as contiguous, immediately addressable space. This means that all the processing which traditionally takes place in a PostScript printer may now take place in the Amiga's memory. C-Ltd's Laser Express printer was designed specifically with this capability in mind. But the capability is there for the Amiga and does not require specific printer hardware at all. There are impact printers capable of 360 dots per inch. The 300 dot per inches which is the standard resolution of most PostScript printers can easily be matched by the Hewlett Packard DeskJet used to produce this newsletter -- but at a fraction of the cost.

The first purely software package designed to take advantage of this capability on the Amiga was PageStream. PageStream is still the only desktop publishing program which provides the ability to produce a document at the highest resolution of the output device. Professional Page promises this ability in its next release, but that is probably still a couple of months off. Pagestream's problem is that, although its output beats any other desktop publishing program on the market, it mathematics do not result in as clean an image as one would normally expect from a PostScript printer. In the case of the HP DeskJet (whose resolution is the same as a PostScript printer), this is not the fault of the output device, but is the fault of the software which does not produce as clean an image as it should.

So along comes PixelScript. PixelScript takes those files originally destined for the PostScript printer, interprets and translates them to a bit-mapped image within the Amiga, and then sends them to any Preferences supported printer. Now that I've gone though that long and involved explanation of what it does, I have very little left to say about the program. The results in this newsletter should speak for themselves. But the results are only part of the story. How easily and how well it works is also in question.

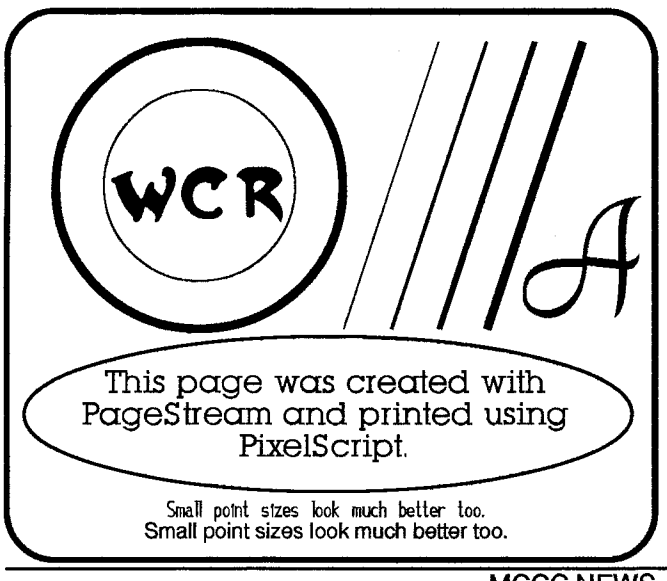
PixelScript operates quite easily. It can be executed from the workbench or the CLI. If executed from the CLI, you can have your choice of operating environments. You can have full Intuition support with gadget and menu control (which requires the most memory to run), direct command execution (you type the PostScript commands from the CLI), or execute it with the command "PXS" followed by one or more PostScript files (it will print the files and then exit). Full ARexx support is also provided. The default configuration is established by first running the program with full Intuition support. This allows you to specify, and save to disk, your printer (either Preferences or



the built in HP LaserJet or DeskJet drivers), the device resolution, page size, and image size.

PixelScript loves memory -- lots of memory. That is to be expected considering the large bit-maps which need to be generated. When PageStream produces a print file, it will produce a bit-map of a portion of the page at a time. Depending on the available memory, it will sometimes do half a page - sometimes just a quarter of a page at a time. PixelScript, on the other hand, insists on doing the entire page at once in true PostScript fashion. This means that you must have huge amounts of memory available. I have a 2.5 meg Amiga 1000 and there have been pages of pattern fills that I created for testing purposes that I have been unable to process, even when all other tasks are shut down. PixelScript also handles memory management poorly. When it shuts down, all memory is released back to the system. But if a file finishes printing and PixelScript is not shut down, the memory used to print the file is not released back to the system. When the next file is started, some of the allocated memory is reused but some is not. In practice, this means that you need to shut down PixelScript between each file and then reload it to make sure that you have enough memory to process the next file.

PixelScript has just two built in fonts -- one is a Times lookalike (used for this text) and the other is a Helvetica lookalike. This means that these two fonts will process faster than any other font. It also means that any other font which you want to use will have to be defined to PixelScript as part of the PostScript file that it is processing. This raises more problems. PageStream is the only Amiga desktop publishing program which will send PostScript font definitions as part of the file that it creates. Professional Page assumes that all the fonts are built into the PostScript printer (a bad assumption even if you had a PostScript printer -- not all fonts are always built in). That means that if you are a Professional Page user, you will have your choice of two fonts. With PageStream, you are free to use any font which has a file ending in ".PS" on the disk. This is the file containing the PostScript font definition. Even this is somewhat limiting since not all fonts sold by PageStream have this file (although those supplied with the program do).



Small point sizes look much better too.

That hits the high points. PixelScript is not perfect, but the results are excellent. You should be able to see the difference. I have no doubt that the memory management problems will be taken care of. Pixelations has also promised more fonts soon. Right now, the combination of PageStream and PixelScript can't be beat.

Shadow of the Beast by Psygnosis

I'm not going to review Shadow of the Beast. Please refer to the review in this issue by Frank Eva. The only comment I can make is that I bought it; I've played it; it's unbelievable; it's worth the money. It is difficult, but not so difficult that you don't stand a chance. Buy it.

Tetris by Spectrum Holobyte

I postponed buying this game for a long time. The public domain version came around quite a while ago. I quickly became hooked. I figured that since the PD version was so good, why spend my hard-earned money on something when I already have a version that I'm perfectly happy with. My curiosity finally won out over good sense and I bought it at METCOM.

In case you're one of the three or four people in the world who don't know yet what Tetris is, I'll try to explain. You have a small rectangle on the screen. Odd shaped geometric pieces drop into the top of this rectangle in a random sequence. You have the control to move the pieces to the left and to the right within the rectangle, and to spin them around a horizontal axis. Your job is to maneuver the pieces so that they fit together at the bottom of the rectangle with no spaces. Each time a horizontal row is complete and free of spaces, that row is removed from the display. Game play continues until the pieces reach the top of the rectangle.

Simple as it sounds, the game is very habit forming. Versions are available for all brands of personal computers and it is one of the most popular games around right now. I guess the big question is -- how much better is the commercial version? The commercial version adds music and it adds pictures for backdrops behind the active rectangle. The Russian music is entertaining (Tetris was originally developed in Russia). The pictures are largely wasted since I am always too busy to look anyway. The first major difference is that the rectangle seems bigger and the colors are easier to work with. The result is that it is easier to tell just where the falling piece is in relation to the pieces on the bottom. Fewer mistakes.

The other major difference is in the options. You can pick the starting level (the speed at which the pieces fall). You can bring up help screens. You can specify if you want the computer to place random blocks at the bottom of the screen to increase the challenge -- and you can specify how high to pile them. You can even play a tournament. In this mode, players compete in an identical situation where the same sequence of pieces is dropped. This makes it entertaining for groups.

My recommendation? Try the PD version. It is available in the library or on the club BBS. If you get as hooked as I am, buy it. It's not terribly expensive and the multiple player option alone makes it worth the expense.

The Write Stuff

C128 Software Review by Jarvis White
From the Newsletter of the Milwaukie Commodore Computer Club

For quite some time now, I've been going to write a short blurb extolling the virtues of this particular work processor. It has been hard to bring myself to this point because I've been a hard-nosed proponent of PaperClip for more years than I care to remember. However, I still remember the struggle I had, with the manual in one hand, going through the tutorials (excellent, I might add) until I wrestled another mystery about my word processor loose. Ah, if only there had been user groups then!

One of the things I like most about The Write Stuff 128 is the fact that you don't have to know anything about word processing in order to use it. It has been designed with enough foresight (seldom found in computer software) to allow the most unskilled user to sit down and write a letter,

"It has been designed with enough foresight ... to allow the most unskilled user to sit down and write a letter, without having to know anything ..."

without having to know anything but how to load the program into the machine and start typing! Of course, one must pre-suppose that some friendly member of a user group has helped modify the Printer Customizer (if necessary) so that when the time comes to send this document to the printer, all that has to be done is to press the UP ARROW key, look at the status line (the one on top), use the cursor keys to move the cursor to PRINT, press RETURN, and follow the prompts! Fantastic.

On the other hand, if you are a dedicated word processor, The Write Stuff 128 offers many features that I have never seen in any other one. For instance, you have a full featured calculator at your disposal, that is, you can do all four mathematical functions, instead of being limited to adding or subtracting rows or columns.

Another of my favorite options is the Split Screen. This is one of the slickest means of editing that I have ever seen. Most everyone who has written a letter, theses, speech, etc. is well aware of the feeling one gets while proof-reading something that he has written and sees one pesky paragraph that just doesn't sound right! No matter how you try to ignore it, it still stands out like a sore thumb, and finally you admit that you would rather eat worms than to send it out to the public the way it stands. This is where you need your trusty old copy of The Write Stuff 128. The Split Screen option will allow you to bring the offending paragraph into both screens (top and bottom) and let you edit either one. You can literally tear it apart until you get it to read just the way you like, and then with a keystroke - you can have the changes become permanent!

And then there are the Macros! One of my pet peeves (with PaperClip) was having to count the number of columns that were necessary to have my address, etc. properly placed in the upper right hand corner of page 1. I know that there are those who just let it stay on the left side, but I was taught that it belonged over there! While reading about this program I became excited over the fact that you could define up to 200 characters with one Macro! Needless to say I played around with this function until I am now able "to put it all over there" instantly by simply typing "M" and then hitting the space bar! Also, if you are one of those who do a great deal of word processing, by using the Macros, you can speed up your typing output considerably simply by learning the ones already defined, or by making a set that you are more comfortable with.

Then, there is this ability to split the program's memory into as many as nine 6-block segments. Of course, you might only need two or three pieces to put a part of another file, record or whatever into the system where you can call it up and enter it whenever and wherever you wish. Although it sounds complicated, it really isn't bad at all, once you get started with it and begin to understand how the function works.

Or suppose that you wish to write an article in two columns. Can you imagine the problems you would have trying to do it with a "normal" word processor? If you can't, well, just try it. With Write Stuff 128 it is nearly as easy as writing a letter to your Aunt Nellie! In fact, why don't you write your next letter this way?

Lastly, if by some mischance of fate, your teacher wants to see if you have paid attention to what you were being taught, and tells you to hand in a "Sentence Outline", for your exam - if you are using The Write Stuff 128, you are luckier than you have any right to be. "BB Outliner" will do the job for you! Now what more could you ask for from your word processor? Please, I don't want to hear that.

Oh yes, there is one more thing. If you have this favorite disk that has all of these programs and have never gotten around to putting them on a menu, then try the "BB Menu Maker". I don't think you will ever regret having invested in The Write Stuff 128 -- if you happen to have a C-128, that is.

In closing, let me add that, unfortunately, there is no such thing as a free lunch. Software is created over along period of time, and, like everyone else, programmers have to eat from the proceeds of their labor. If we don't support them, there will no longer be innovative programs like this one, because the really good programmers will be doing something else that will allow them to earn a livelihood.

I have only mentioned a few of the features found in this program. It figures that they are the ones that I have found most fascinating. There are many others -- ones that you may find even more so. But then I didn't want to write a book -- even if I am doing it with The Write Stuff.

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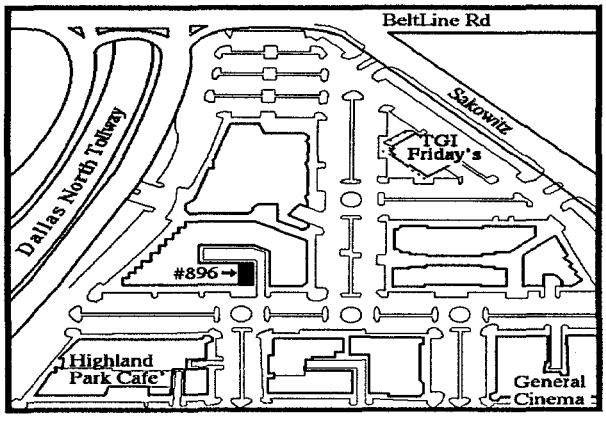

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Shadow Of The Beast

Amiga Software Review by Frank Eva
Downloaded From GEnie

Prepare yourself for an optic and sonic experience beyond anything you've ever seen before, that blows all other computer games right out of the water! Shadow of the Beast is an arcade/adventure extraordinaire!

Your objective as the vengeful warrior is to fight your way through several different regions in order to reach the heart of the enemy's stronghold and face your ultimate adversary, the "beast". Any creature you encounter will invariably be hostile and will cause damage if it touches you. Contact can be avoided by punching or kicking, or by shooting them, if you have been able to find the appropriate weapon.

Each time you are damaged, your heart rate will increase, as measured by the monitor in the upper left-hand corner of the screen. This indicator and the "strength rating" counter next to it, are the only status readouts that travel from screen to screen, meaning that the vast majority of each of the game's 350 screens is filled with great graphics.

The forest's 13 levels of parallax scrolling gives a real feeling of visual depth. Fifty frames per second makes the scroll as smooth as silk. The often very large sprite/bob opponents suddenly appear from the boundaries of the screen, and it is up to the player to determine the correct method of defeating or avoiding them.

The warrior begins with a strength rating of 12, which can be restored along the way by picking up potions. This is accomplished simply by moving over their symbols, but the problem always is where to find them. They may be hidden by a pile of rocks, etc., that must be busted apart to reveal their presence.

Keys must be found to access other higher levels of play. For example, don't bother to climb down the well, unless you have found the key to the hidden door at the bottom!

The joystick routine has been much simplified, compared to other karate-action games. Only the four cardinal positions of the joystick are recognized. To move the warrior sprite, a combination caveman/ninja with the head of a ram, left/right, or up/down, use the four corresponding positions of the joystick. When not climbing ladders, the up/down movements are replaced by crouching or jumping. Diagonal movements result in no actions at all, and in a pinch, the time lost could be deadly.

Pressing the fire button punches or kicks (while jumping). In higher levels, weapons can be found that are fired when the joystick trigger button is pressed, and these motions supplant the punching/kicking routines.

Throughout all of these animated actions, the Amiga never bogs down, even when several large sprites are on the screen at the same time. Coupled with the fact that a full four channel stereo soundtrack runs concurrently, along with sound effects that do not disable the music, makes it hard to believe that Shadow of the Beast is not a dedicated coin-op!

> "Prepare yourself for an optic and sonic experience beyond anything you've ever seen..."

There are some 130 different monsters in this hostile world, and the music is appropriately beautiful. The 900K soundtrack uses digitized instruments sampled at 20 kilohertz. It sounds so real, an innocent bystander will be hard-pressed to identify it as something computer generated. The death dirge at the end of a game is especially intriguing, for it uses a relatively obscure instrument, the pan flute, to create an atmosphere that perfectly accompanies the final screen, a view of the forest, fronted by the skeletal remains of the warrior.

The only possible complaint against Shadow of the Beast is the lack of a game save function. Since there is no scoring, (the only objective is to reach and defeat the beast), this will mean learning and memorizing perhaps hundreds of techniques for moving through and defeating each level's adversaries. Reaching the final confrontation could take several hours of continuous play, once the gamer has become proficient at conquering each level. But then, Psygnosis has not earned its reputation by publishing wimp games.

Oh, and by the way, you get a free t-shirt with each game (in case you're curious, it's a "large") that proudly displays the Beast logo, rendered by artist Roger Dean!

Recommendation: You should buy this game, even if you don't like the play mechanics, or the scenario, or anything else about it. Shadow of the Beast is what the Amiga was created for! It is worth the price of admission, and it will, if nothing else, make an awesome demo to show off your machine's capabilities!

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My Disk Is Quick

Amiga Virus Horror Story by Don Doell
From the Newsletter of The Catalina Commodore Computer Club

It was a dark and stormy night when I got in to play back my telephone messages. It had been another one of those days in Tucson -- hot, very hot, with just the trace of even more heat in the air -- you know the kind -- very hot, and my last client had stiffed me on the fee and walked off with two of my best disks, after I had managed to save her biznagas from a certain crash. Well, she was beautiful to look at, and maybe that was enough, I was thinking. I threw my hat at the rack and missed again and then went into the office. I hoped my calls would bring me better luck, so I thumbed the playback button.

The first call so immediately caught my attention that I completely forgot to remove the shoulder holster in which Baby snuggled. Baby is a 3.5" caliber Antivirus 5.0, a hard piece of the nicest software you ever saw. I stood at my desk, idly patting Baby, as I listened. The caller sounded desperate, and just the smallest trace of a sob escaped his lips as he talked.

"This is Sidney Lorre. Barnie at South American No-Longer-Retail suggested I call you. He thinks I have a virus and that you're the only one who can help me." It was there that he sobbed. The sob was very faint and low-pitched, like the cry of a far-away humpback off Catalina Island in the spring. I've always been a sucker for that sound, so I called him back, and we talked.

"A virus? What kind?" I asked. "The SCA? The Byte Bandit? Or, is it, maybe" (I hesitated at the thought) "the ROM Hammer?"

"I don't know, I don't know. It seems to have gotten into the company's Amiga 2500, and I'm at the end of my wits." he answered. "I can't run the company software or access our project on the hard disk. Can you help?" I heard that sound again.

As I said, I've always been a sucker for that sound, so I invited him over and told him to bring all of the floppy disks he had been using before and during the trouble. I told him to leave the hard disk where it was.

I opened the door at his knock. He was tall, very tall, and I slowly looked from his chest upward. When I finally got to his face, I could see that a faint film of perspiration covered his upper lip and eyes were glazed with fear. The bigger they are, the harder they fall, I thought. Here was a guy with everything: looks, an Amiga 2500, and a real job. But, it was he with the virus, not me. The scales do balance.

I took the disk box from his limp hands and led the way to my 1000. He followed like a puppy. I pushed aside all the old pizza boxes around the CPU, until I could see its slots. I inserted one of his disks in df1:. After doing the kick on the machine, I pulled my Antivirus 5.0 from its holster. My visitor's eyes widened when he saw it. Its blue sides and silver gate-shutter glinted in the light from the desk lamp. I stabbed it into df0:, expecting to see the hypodermic-cursor that Joey the Mechanic had made for me. But the loading never got that far.

The alarms went off, and a requestor popped up: "SCA Virus detected! Erase it? Yes . . . No." Both VirusX and ViewBoot had nailed a virus to the wall: another viral child's effort had come to naught. Lorre was stunned, but I smiled, having seen it all before and knowing I had done it again -- detected the virus. He didn't know how lucky he was that it wasn't the ROM Hammer.

I pulled his disk and looked at it. It was a backup copy of Footman. I advised erasing the virus, since the disk was only a backup. He nodded, as though in a daze. I re-inserted and clicked on "Y". The boot scan now showed a red-white-and-blue, clean bill of health. The disk worked fine, and he was able to play the game for the first time, while I watched. He was like a kid again.

I checked the rest of his disks. None of them had been working. Out of the six remaining, four had the virus: Arkanoid, Archon, Flight Sinulator II, and Mean 18. They were all originals, sent to him by his only brother in Phoenix, no doubt the source of the virus. I labelled them and gave them back.

"You had better check with the dealer whether these bootblocks are necessary, before you try to erase that virus." I said. "In the meantime, let me make an antiviral disk for you. You can use it to check the company floppies. Your hard disk won't be affected by the SCA."

"How can I thank you?" he asked.

"Don't thank me." I answered. "Thank VirusX and Viewboot."

As we walked to the door, there was a knock. I opened the door. The woman standing there was another beauty. Lorre left, and I looked at her. Her long, red hair hung down in long ringlets, like the waves off Catalina in the summer. She was well-formed, but there was fear in her steady, gray eyes. She was clutching a box of disks. Her knuckles were white.

"Are you the antiviral fellow?" she asked, with just the trace of a sob. It was that sound again.

I invited her in.

Gail Wellington

General Manager
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Proposed Amiga North Dallas Chapter

On November 18, 1989 an organizational meeting of the proposed Amiga North Dallas Chapter will be held at the Dallas Public Library, Fretz Park Branch, 6990 Belt Line Road from 1:00 to 3:30 PM. Fretz Library is on the southeast corner of Hillcrest and Belt Line Road in North Dallas.

Of the details to be worked out are (1) a regular meeting place, (2) the nomination of chapter officers, and (3) an agenda for our first chapter meeting. The meeting will be open to interested members, guests, and those willing to support an "Amiga North Dallas Chapter" .

All interested parties please attend. For more information contact Craig Bird (817) Metro 540-3360.

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Amiga By-The-Loop
Craig Bird

This month's meeting opened with news and information about METCOM*89. As we know now, this year's event was a success! Many thanks to Ned Kelly and all those who participated in making METCOM work so well.

Brent Wood announced the proposed slate of club officers for 1990. They include Ned Kelly, president; Craig Bird, vice-president; John Malmstrom, secretary; Harold Williams, treasurer; Gary Campbell, librarian; and Rick Meyer, education coordinator. Elections for chapter officers will be held in December and nominations for all officer positions will be accepted in November. Brent announced that he would be stepping down as chapter president next year, leaving at least one position open. If you are interested in becoming a chapter officer, please come to the November meeting, or let another member who will be attending know your intentions.

Contributions for this month's P.D./shareware program are being collected for ConMan, a very useful program. As you know, have been collecting contributions for those P.D./shareware programs that we, as a chapter, feel are most useful. To date, over $150.00 has been collected and forwarded to those who work so hard to bring us useful software. Certainly these contributions help to insure a continued outpouring of P.D. and shareware programs for the Amiga.

George Heyser of Metropolitan Computer/Video Systems in Richardson gave a presentation of PostScript (a scalable typesetting language which communicates to a printer.) Metropolitan offers many types of printing and typesetting services available for those who need professional quality output from the Amiga. Meanwhile ... there are a variety of programs which support PostScript output such as Professional Page, Professional Draw, Shakespeare, PageStream, Excellence, City Desk and KindWords. Metropolitan offers a bulletin board service which allows you to upload your files to them for processing and pick them up when you arrive. Call for details. George brought several examples of object oriented and text output from several different printers from dot matrix to 2400 dpi laser output.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday November 14th at 7:30. See you then!

CHAPTER NEWS

Amiga Central
Harold Williams

Our October meeting featured a presentation by Brent Hester of his newest icon collection called "Iconstruction" (a two disk set). This collection is the follow-up to Brent's first collection named "Iconvention". Both collections include hundreds of icons and many utilities for creating and manipulating icons. The icons have been designed by Brent. The utilities are a collection of freely distributable programs. Brent demonstrated IconMaster -- one of the most powerful of these utilities. Brent has donated both of these collections (a total of three disks) to our library.

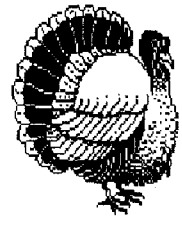
The normal question/answer and rumor discussion was lead by Jack Smith. There were a lot of good things said about METCOM. Everyone was particularly impressed by Jay Miner. Other topics discussed included the falling price of RAM chips, Commodore's new media blitz, the problems with 6.0 and 6.1 mother boards, Gail Wellington's upcoming visit at S.C.O.P.E., and the possibility of a 3-meg Amiga 500.

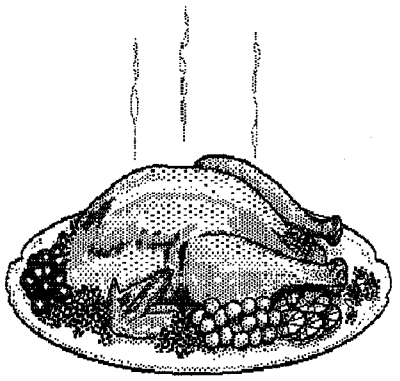
We also had a new feature added to our library at the October meeting. There is now a collection of "Super Disks". These disk contain a compilation of some of the best public domain and shareware software from our library. The set currently consists of five disks. SD-WButil contains WorkBench and CLI enhancements. SD-DiskUtil is a collection of disk and file handling utilities. SD-TeleUtil has all of the newest compression programs used in uploading and downloading along with two telecommunication programs. SD-PicUtil is a collection of utilities for handling those beautiful Amiga pictures. The last disk is called SD-MiscUtil and contains a collection of miscellaneous utilities such as calculators, music programs, calendars, system monitors, etc. This collection of "super" utilities will continue to be updated and also is expected to grow to include new topics. Ask about them at the next meeting.

Arlington/GP
Eddie Allen

The Saturday workshop was foregone in favor of METCOM/89. The November workshop will be held same time and same place as always, come and chew.

The Tuesday meeting saw a multitude of printers on display,





CHAPTER NEWS

including the one that kicked off the procession, the trusty 1525. Also presented was an Okidata 120, Star Gemini, Blue Chip, and my notes have deserted me at this point. Some printers have a Commodore serial interface, some a Centronics parallel interface, and a few printers have both. There are a few Commodore to Centronic interfaces available, allowing these printers to be used via either the user port or the serial connection coming out of the C64/128 or daisy chaining through the disk drive(s). Almost all new printers being introduced now use only the Centronics interface.

Club disk number 290 (C64) and 723 (C128) contain an excellent BASIC program that demonstrates ALL possible iterations that might be used in conjunction with four Commodore to Centronics interfaces and certain Centronics printers. The BASIC logic contained therein is an excellent tutorial on programming.

In November's meeting, we will be open for nominations of our officers for next year. Janet Hamm will present a biorhythm program (will it tell if we are chilled out enough?). Gerald Roberts will enlighten us on using an Abacus product you can use for Stock Charting Technical Analysis (whew).

Until next month, be cool.

Fort Worth
Mary Louise Hagemeyer

The Fort Worth Chapter was well represented at METCOM, which took the place of our October meeting.

In November, Hank Costello of Budget Computers in Arlington will bring us new ideas about using Commodore computers. In addition, we will have election of chapter officers, disk reviews, a BASIC lesson, and your questions and answers. This will be Fort Worth's last meeting in 1989, so we hope to see everyone there.

Remember, it's the SECOND Saturday, November 11, 1:30 p.m. at the library on Hulen Street.

Hurst/Euless/Bedford
Robyn Wilson

The program for the October 21st meeting was about copy and backup utilities. Eldor Luedtke, Jr. and John Ware discussed the program using two different methods. Eldor concentrated on the GEOS way of doing backups and John covered the programming aspects. Eldor first mentioned that GeoWrite can take your word processing files and turn them from PetASCII to ASCII and back again. This is typically used for uploading text files to a bulletin board. An ASCII file will have no special formatting such as margins or top or bottom of page markings. Eldor mentioned that when copying a GEOS file or backing one up, use the GEOS utilities that are provided.

John Ware then continued on to say that making only one copy is legal for a second copy as long as it is for your own use. He said that Fast Hackem and Maverick will get 90 % of software copied. John mentioned some helpful facts about disk drives. No two drives are the same and disks wear out after much usage. When you format a new disk for the first time, the whole disk is being erased, however, when formatting a used disk, the directory table is changed only. That means you can possibly get your erased information back. A scratched file is not really gone from the disk. It can be recovered.

This is where a "sector editor" comes in. It is both a powerful and dangerous utility to use. A sector editor hides files, find where hidden files are, change names of files and lots more. It can also enable you to personalize your disk. An example is changing the original authors name to your name to make it seem like you wrote the program. Reading a good manual before utilizing this would be a wise idea.

November 18th is the next meeting. It will be at the Hurst Recreation Center at 1:30 pm.

Thought For The Month

If time heals all wounds, how come the belly button stays the same?

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Our meetings are open to all. Membership dues are $20 per year or $12 for six months and entitle the member to a monthly mailed copy of the MCCC News, free access to the club's extensive public domain and shareware sofware library, and discounts at many area merchants. An additional $12 annual fee provides access to the MCCC ASCII and Graphic bulletin board systems.

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The deadline for submissions to the MCCC News is the Monday following the third Saturday of each month. Payment must accompany all ad copy. Make checks payable to MCCC and mail to P.O. Box 813, Bedford, Texas 76095.

Calendar of Events

Nov 11	Arlington/Grand Prairie Workshop 1:30 PM - Grand Prairie Library Louis Nailor, 214-262-4576	
Nov 11	Fort Worth Chapter 1:30 PM - Southwest Regional Library Bob Krause, 817-292-6639	
Nov 14	Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter 7:30 PM - N.Richland Hills Church of Christ Brent Wood, 817-246-3707	
Nov 16	Amiga Central Chapter 7:30 PM - Arlington Community Center Bill Keatley, 817-485-0666	
Nov 18	Hurst-Euless-Bedford Chapter 1:30 PM - Hurst Recreation Center Eldor Luedtke, Jr., 817-626-0518	
Nov 21	Arlington/Grand Prairie Chapter 7:00 PM - Arlington Community Center Glen Herring, 817-572-0489	
Dec 2	MCCC Board of Directors 10:00 AM - N.Richland Hills Community Ctr. Jack DeTore, 817-275-3762	

December Newsletter Deadline - November 20

MCCC Christmas Party

Saturday, December 2 - 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm
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Normal Meeting Schedule

1st Sat	MCCC Board of Directors
2nd Tues	Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
2nd Sat	Arlington/Grand Prairie Workshop
2nd Sat	Fort Worth Chapter
3rd Tues	Arlington/Grand Prairie Chapter
3rd Thurs	Amiga Central Chapter
3rd Sat	HEB Chapter

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